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Isaac of Antioch.

Homily on the Royal City.

By C. Moss.

I.

The Homily which is here edited and translated — so far as I know — for the first time, is the work of the fifth century Syriac writer, Isaac of Antioch, “one of the stars of Syriac literature”, as WRIGHT¹⁾ calls him. It is contained in a single manuscript, British Museum. Add. 14591, occupying fol. 48 a (bottom) — 54 a in that volume. WRIGHT, in his *Catalogue of Syriac MSS. in the British Museum* (p. 669, MS. Nr. 740), gives the following description of our Codex: 5

“Ad. MS. 14591. Vellum, about 24.0 cm × 15.5 cm, consisting of 151 leaves. Each leaf is divided into two columns of from 25 to 31 lines. This volume is written in an elegant Estrangela, apparently of the end of the VIth century”. The work is in heptasyllabic metre, as are all Isaac’s published homilies, and the vigour of the style is a very noticeable feature. 10

Our Mêmra, which is entitled ܡܝܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ, “Concerning the Royal City”, or “Concerning the Capital”, describes the advance on the city by the Huns, an advance which failed in its objective owing to the Lord visiting the barbarian host with pestilence, a “sickness of the bowels”. Just as in the case of Sennacherib when he attacked Jerusalem, “the 20

1) See his *History of Syriac Literature*, p. 51.

riders of the steeds slumbered and slept, and the cruel army was silenced". Besides the main narrative there are the long digressions so characteristic of Syriac authors, one comparing the incident with the Assyrians' siege of Jerusalem, one re-
 5 counting the disputation between Justice and God which Paul told to the Romans.

There are other homilies by Isaac of historical interest, describing the unfortunate experiences of certain of the frontier inhabitants who were caught in the wars between the Empire
 10 and the Persians¹). Our Homily, however, is obviously of greater importance, not merely because it deals with events at the very centre of the Empire, but also because it may actually shed new light on the period. Our knowledge of the Eastern Empire's history in the fifth century is un-
 15 fortunately far from complete, owing to the gaps in Priscus' history, and anything which can add to it is necessarily valuable.

The "Royal City" referred to must be Constantinople, for a Syrian like Isaac could not possibly have applied that
 20 title to Rome. This city was twice menaced by the Huns; between 441—3, when Philippopolis and Arcadiopolis were captured²), and in 447, when Thermopylae was reached³), and "many of it (the capital's) inhabitants fled from it in terror"⁴). Now, in 447 there took place an earthquake, which
 25 destroyed a great part of the city walls⁵) and, as it is obviously impossible that the author could have recorded the

1) The two poems on the capture of Bēth Hūr by the Arabs (BICKELL 11, 12 = BEDJAN 48, 49) and the second homily on Fasting (BICKELL 14 = BEDJAN 17).

2) *Cambridge Med. Hist.*, Vol. 1, p. 363. 3) *Ibid.*

4) BURY, *History of Later Roman Empire*, Vol. 1, p. 275, quoting Callinicus: *Vita Hypatii*, p. 108.

5) *Cambridge Med. Hist.*, Vol. 1, p. 467. According to LEBEAU, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, Vol. 6, p. 157, this earthquake occurred on January 26th. "Ce tremblement, le plus terrible qu'on eût jamais vu dans un pays où ces accidents étaient fréquents, fut aussi le plus général. Il s'étendit dans tout l'Orient et dans la Thrace" See, e. g., EVA-
 GRIUS, *Eccl. Hist.*, Book 1, cap. 17.

events of 447 without mentioning this earthquake, it seems probable that the homily refers to the year 441. Then, too, no mention whatsoever is made of a previous attack on the Constantinople district, while the wealth which the city is described as possessing also implies that 441 is the year of 5 Isaac's homily, as the numerous large payments of Hungeld between 441 and 447 would have considerably reduced its riches. We have, therefore, a contemporary account of, most probably, the 441 advance on Constantinople which furnishes a new explanation of the failure of the expedition. The pesti- 10 lence is described with some detail and does not seem to be simply imaginary. On the other hand, it seems difficult to understand why, if the Hunnish forces had been decimated by pestilence, the campaign should still have gone against the Empire, ending, indeed, in a most unfavourable treaty 15 in 443. A possible explanation is that only part of the barbarian host had advanced to the Bosphorus, and its collapse, while it relieved Constantinople, did not materially affect the whole campaign.

The homily ends with the writer reproving the citizens 20 for engaging in religious disputations; it was always his view that ignorant men should not discuss such matters, which were beyond their comprehension¹). This might possibly lead to further disasters; earlier, in the first lines, a further danger is implied in the lines: "Again give thanks to the cross that 25 it may again fence in thy breaches. — Again let thy harp play to it for again thou seekest its help". In the digression on Justice the moralist makes it clear that, in his opinion, the mere fact that they were Christians would not save them from a heathen army; God's justice was not a respecter 30 of persons and, if they were evil, would cause them to be destroyed.

1) Compare NORMAN McLEAN, *Enc. Britt.*, s. v. "Isaac of Antioch". "He judges with extreme severity those who argue about religion while neglecting its practice, and those, who are thought stupid and ignorant dare to pry into mysteries which are sealed to the angels".

Br. Mus.
Add. 14591
* fol. 48 v. a

مذہب / مذهب و لا مذہب ملاحہ

[illegible][illegible]

حده و اما احسن الحاشیه : و نیز ۱۰۰۱ و ۱۱۱۱ و ۱۱۱۱۱

[illegible]

٥٠٨ من مائة : مائة ١٠٠ خمسة وخمسون

۱۰۰۱/۱۰۰۱ * ۱۰۰۱/۱۰۰۱ : ۱۰۰۱/۱۰۰۱ ۱۰۰۱/۱۰۰۱ : ۱۰۰۱/۱۰۰۱

ملعبا فجمي بنحصد: هلا يهنا حب بعدنا *

صعلا صسلا : صسا صسا : صسا صسا :

ملا بمعد حرامه : موم مسلمان! بيمه دونه :

صه لہا جرینا ہجرتہا : جد : احد مثلا متکلم :

صده مثلاً ق ۵۰۰۰۰ : ۵۰۰۰۰ / ۵۰۰۰۰ / ۵۰۰۰۰

حجۃ الہیاء حجۃ الوداع : حجۃ الوداع = حجۃ الہیاء :

فَصَوْنَهُمْ لَهُمْ وَفِيهِمْ لَهُمْ وَفِيهِمْ لَهُمْ

مسألة في فضل يوم الجمعة: ولا صلاة الا بعد الصلاة.

محمد بن جليل مرفوع: ٥١١/٥١٢ محمد بن * بن محمد

تفحصها مستلها فمحمب. فعلا قولا وادعها.

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهٰذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَكَ شَاكِرِيْنَ

سورة المائدة: لا حية ولا حية ولا حية.

معمولاً معمولاً لا معمولاً: سدره حمزه معمولاً لا مدلل: ❖

مغلا حمدا: حمدیه منط مخریلا:

والله اعلم بالصواب

جذب و اقبال و اوج و انحطاط.

10

* fol. 48 v. b

* fol. 49 r. a 20

[illegible]

^{a)} *N* in margin (in a different hand).

^{b)} The second ~~ḥ~~ cancelled by the scribe.

* fol. 50 r. a

60

* fol. 50 r. b

70

* fol. 50 v. a

80

^{a)} ^{הוה} added in margin (in later hand).

حرفه دى وى لا / ممتنع : دى وى لا / ممتنع :

محکم دلائل سے مزین و متنوع و منفرد موضوعات پر مشتمل مفت آن لائن مکتبہ

* fol. 50 v. b * حانہ لاء : * افسوس حال چاہیے :

مستخرج من كتاب الحقايق : لا يبيح له ان يؤمنه :^{a)}

سبح اسمك يا ذا الجلال والإكرام : سبحانك يا ذا الجلال والإكرام :

[illegible]

١٥٠ : ١٥١

90 ? / لا حد ولا لا : . لا حد ولا لا : .

سجده /۱۰۰ حبیباً و مومناً : وحماً /۱۰۰ حقه و ناز :

[illegible]

حکمہ: لا بیبہ جہا ارفع: و لا دہمہ لا حصہ: ۱۵۰

* fol. 51 r. a الف / رم حنك : م : / رم * ح : بقدهم :

الحق في كل حال لا يتركه الله ولا يتركه

٥٠٨ مسمو لاسل جال : واسم لا لا د : هـ

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840.

وہ و ذلہ و حقہ : ہوسے / رہے / ہوتے

[illegible]

وہملا لکھل ملال : ہدقمل ملال فلال لاں :

وہی کہ بتد لافحات : و معہا جنتک لافحات :

حقاً حاصل می‌باشد: و حاصل آن ختم است.

هــجـيـمـلـا فـيـمـا اوجـمـلـا : وقـمـجـلـا لا لا وقـمـجـلـا :

* fol. 51 r. b * ٥١ ر ب : * ٥١ ر ب

لا خير طارل وخفلا. حله حقه؛ ومعه.

سخقلا استلا صحنه: مع وسملا وصالحه: *

וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל

॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

[illegible][illegible]

110

^a) No dot in first ? of ω_{11}/ω_{12} .

* fol. 51 v. a

120

[illegible]

مع طابعه لا ينفذ [ب] : ولا ملام حولاً موصوفه :

* fol. 51 v. b

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

مبلغ و اسعار حسنه جدا. و مقدار و بلال بصره ج.

אשר יחיד ודבור: ומן האדם יחיד ודבור: *
 ודבור יחיד ודבור: ומן האדם יחיד ודבור: *

حللہ ۱۰ وافر محتلا: وسملا ۵ وسملا ۵۰۱۵۰۰

130

[illegible]

۱۰ صبح دعا و نماز : مہینا کی حققت حتمی :

* ۱۰ صلیب * ۲۱ مصلحہ : ۵۱ ۵۵ ۵۶ ۵۷ ۵۸ ۵۹

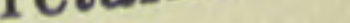
[illegible]

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم : حمد لله وقدموه *

مصحف مدعی / فدا : ولا لک الحمد وفضل :

۵۵۱ جلال و سجدہ : ۵۵۲ صلا و زود حقہ ط :

a) The γ cancelled in the MS.

b)—b) ; Originally there were seyāmē on the  of  but they have been erased. The plur. verb, however, was retained.

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

200 * fol. 53 v. b
 210 * fol. 54 r. a
 210

a) ܡܝܢܡܐ in margin = ܡܝܢܡܐ.

b) New line in MS.

220

* fol. 54 r. b

حَتِّبَا لَّا رَهْبَۃَ ۖ وَهَلْ يَمْلِكُ حَبِيبَا ۖ
 لَمَّا مَدَّ يَدَاۤىِٕهِمَا ۖ وَلَا تَخْذَرَا مَعْلَمِي دَارَۃَ ۖ
 حَمَلَا * مَعْنَا هَزَلَا ۖ سَلَفَ مَعْدِنَا لَنِي دَارَۃَ ۖ
 اَلْحَبِيبَا لَمَّا مَدَّ يَدَاۤىِٕهِمَا ۖ مَعَ قِيَمَا هَوَلَتَا ۖ
 لَمَّا مَدَّ يَدَاۤىِٕهِمَا ۖ مَعَ حَزَنَا هَوَلَتَا ۖ
 مَرَوْنَا مَعَ اَزْدَا قَبِيْلَا ۖ مَرَوْنَا مَعَ وَرَاحَتَاۤىِٕهِمَا ۖ
 مَعَ حَبَاۤىِٕهِمَا ۖ مَعَ سَبَاۤىِٕهِمَا ۖ مَعَ سَبَاۤىِٕهِمَا ۖ
 مَعَ اَزْدَا حَمَلَا ۖ مَعَ مَدَّ يَدَاۤىِٕهِمَا ۖ
 مَعَ حَبَاۤىِٕهِمَا ۖ مَعَ مَدَّ يَدَاۤىِٕهِمَا ۖ

عَلَم

a) New line in MS.

